

## One Hundred and Ninetynine Pounds of Clay Leaning Forward

the chain is on the door  
the naked women shut out  
the naked power as I  
blush before turbine-powered  
sun-powered jets  
knowing that I am not very good at  
going on —  
I'd rather watch a beetle crawl the sick  
powdered dust of  
earth  
while you are aware of my  
cold handshake and  
my cigar more alive than my  
eyes, my  
wit will soon be dimmer than  
last Fall's sunlight, I'll surely die  
under the disordered match of some Freak  
who loves flies ...  
but, christ, friends --  
the luger, the mortar, the patchwork fitting  
as I gape out at you from a  
porkchop mouth  
take me as Caesar was taken  
or  
Joan of Arc  
or  
the man who fell off the fire escape drunk  
or  
the suicide at Bellevue  
or Van Gogh confused with  
ravens  
and the atomic yellow.

I hold everything away from myself  
so that you may become  
real and shaking and stemmed  
and ascending and blue and buttermilk

as the chorus girls kick out,  
flags wave, their crotches stink,  
the eagle sinks into the sea, the ants take  
Notre Dame as  
our dirty time is just about  
served and done.

a world, really --

a world, really, of Booths and Oswalds  
and Kennedies and Lincolns  
(there are so many Lincoln Boulevards  
I get lost)

a world really  
where the bottom is no better or no worse  
than the top --  
all aching  
ripping the top off a peanutbutter  
jar, watching the rain stain the flowers  
in the wallpaper  
watching it rain  
watching the wrinkles form in the  
hands the face

remembering the songs that meant the  
years

feeling like crying but  
instead  
buying a dog and naming it  
Hot Tits  
or Hiroshima or  
Teddy, gross stained flywing  
caught in the resturant window of the  
brain with the  
tall bakers walking around with tall  
hats -- really, a world, really:  
197 degrees keeps the insects off  
keeps it pure for the  
tooth.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, California

Days Like Tuesday

So many days  
are like Tuesday  
we have trouble  
telling the difference  
  
especially if  
for an extra special reason  
we need an extra special day  
to specialize

Across the Street  
  
Across the street  
the house with the  
mansard roof  
stares frog-eyed,  
disapproving,  
on my stumbling home  
at dawn.

-- Charles Shaw